

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application, and are marked to show changes.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing an extended manufacturing environment, comprising:

receiving, at a manufacturer's server, a communication from a customer of the manufacturer;

automatically processing the communication at the manufacturer's server;

automatically transmitting an order for supplies from the manufacturer's server to a supplier of the supplies, the supplies needed by the manufacturer to manufacture at least one product for the customer; ~~and~~

providing the customer in real-time with detailed information about the product as it is being manufactured by the manufacturer; and

controlling interactions between the customer and other customers, the supplier, and other suppliers by restricting the other customers and the suppliers with which the customer can interact.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the receiving step comprises receiving the communication which comprises an order for the at least one product.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising running a simulation to determine whether the order for the at least one product can be filled by the manufacturer.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the receiving step comprises receiving the communication which comprises a request to change an existing order for the at least one product.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 further comprising running a simulation to determine at least one impact of making the change request.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the running step comprises running the simulation to determine at least one of a loss of ship date, a surcharge for re-assembling the at least one product, and an unexpected increase in price due to a change in sub-components of the at least one product.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the receiving step comprises receiving the communication which comprises a request for supplies.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving, at the manufacturer's server, a request for detailed product quality information from the customer.

9. (Currently Amended) A system embodied in a computer-readable medium and for providing an extended manufacturing environment, the system comprising:

a manufacturing interface module configured to receive a communication from a customer of a manufacturer, automatically process the communication, and automatically pass control to an ordering module;

the ordering module configured to automatically transmit an order for supplies to a supplier of the supplies, the supplies needed by the manufacturer to manufacture at least one product for the customer; and

a communications interface module configured to provide the customer in real-time with detailed information about the product as it is being manufactured by the manufacturer and to control interactions between the customer and other customers, the supplier, and other suppliers by restricting the other customers and the suppliers with which the customer can interact.

10. (Original) The system of claim 9 wherein the communication comprises an order for the at least one product.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10 further comprising a simulation module configured to run a simulation to determine whether the order for the at least one product can be filled by the manufacturer.

12. (Original) The system of claim 9 wherein the communication comprises a request to change an existing order for the at least one product.

13. (Original) The system of claim 12 further comprising a simulation module configured to run a simulation to determine at least one impact of making the change request.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13 wherein the simulation module is capable of running the simulation to determine at least one of a loss of ship date, a surcharge for re-assembling the at least one product, and an unexpected increase in price due to a change in sub-components of the at least one product.

15. (Original) The system of claim 9 wherein the communication comprises a request for supplies.

16. (Original) The system of claim 9 wherein the manufacturing interface module is further configured to receive from the customer a request for detailed product quality information.

17. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture having computer-readable program means embodied therein for providing an extended manufacturing environment, comprising:

computer-readable program means for receiving, at a manufacturer's server, a communication from a customer of the manufacturer;

computer-readable program means for automatically processing the communication at the manufacturer's server;

computer-readable program means for automatically transmitting an order for supplies from the manufacturer's server to a supplier of the supplies, the supplies needed by the manufacturer to manufacture at least one product for the customer; and

computer-readable program means for providing the customer in real-time with detailed information about the product as it is being manufactured by the manufacturer; and

computer-readable program means for controlling interactions between the customer and other customers, the supplier, and other suppliers by restricting the other customers and the suppliers with which the customer can interact.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the detailed information includes quality information about the being-manufactured product.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the detailed information includes quantity information about the being-manufactured product.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the detailed information includes the location within the manufacturer of the being-manufactured product.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the detailed information includes statistical process control information about the being-manufactured product.

22. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9 wherein the detailed information includes quality information about the being-manufactured product.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9 wherein the detailed information includes quantity information about the being-manufactured product.

24. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9 wherein the detailed information includes the location within the manufacturer of the being-manufactured product.

25. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9 wherein the detailed information includes statistical process control information about the being-manufactured product.

26. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable program means of claim 17 wherein the detailed information includes quality information about the being-manufactured product.

27. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable program means of claim 17 wherein the detailed information includes quantity information about the being-manufactured product.

28. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable program means of claim 17 wherein the detailed information includes the location within the manufacturer of the being-manufactured product.

29. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable program means of claim 17 wherein the detailed information includes statistical process control information about the being-manufactured product.

30. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the interactions comprise discussion threads.

31. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the interactions comprise streaming video.

32. (New) The system of claim 9 wherein the interactions comprise discussion threads.

33. (New) The system of claim 9 wherein the interactions comprise streaming video.

34. (New) The computer-readable program of claim 17 wherein the interactions comprise discussion threads.

35. (New) The computer-readable program of claim 17 wherein the interactions comprise streaming video.